

Adult Literacy Contact Centre NEWSLETTER



January 1991

Volume 4, Number 1

A project of the Adult Basic Education Association of B.C.

BCGEU Literacy Initiative

A B.C. Government Employees' Union initiative to provide literacy information pamphlets to employees and clients in government ministries throughout the province was launched in January.

The BCGEU has developed two pamphlets which highlight some of the symptoms of adult illiteracy and advertise the Adult Literacy Contact Centre's local and toll-free help line. The project is part of the literacy Public Awareness Program, one of the 1989/90 cost-shared projects between the Ministry of Advanced Education, Training and Technology and the National Literacy Secretariat.

Linda Tosczak, BCGEU Education Officer, says twenty thousand pamphlets have been distributed through a network of 2,600 shop stewards to every government ministry in B.C. One pamphlet, titled "Do You Have a Friend Who Can't Read This?" is intended to be available in reception areas of government offices and accessible to the general public. The other, titled "Is the Form Still Blank? Maybe Your Client Can't Read," is intended for use by government employees with established, repeat clientele (at the Ministry of Social Services and Housing, for example). Approximately ten thousand of each were printed.

John Shields, BCGEU President, says the union took the action because "we saw we could fill a void in raising the profile of adult literacy by using our existing shop steward network." He adds the union "wanted to communicate the message that adult literacy is an achievable goal by emphasizing how easy it is for adults to get information about available training in their own communities." □

NewsReader Page Honoured by Southam

The "NewsReader" page in the Vancouver Province newspaper, one of the 1990/91 literacy cost-shared projects between the Ministry of Advanced Education, Training and Technology and the National Literacy Secretariat, has won an award for excellence in journalism.

"NewsReader," a weekly feature for beginning adult readers which has appeared in the Province since March, 1990, won the Southam Inc. President's Award on December 23, 1990. It is the first time the Province has won the award. The "NewsReader" page was a joint project between Province special projects editor Susan MacDonald, Westcoast Reader editor Joan Acosta of Capilano College and Laurie Gould, adult basic education instructor at Vancouver Community College.

MacDonald says the award is "intended to recognize Southam employees who demonstrate exceptional performance in their jobs." She says she received it "for having the sense to see that Joan and Laurie had a really good idea, and to go with it." The award will be presented at a Southam annual general meeting in May. MacDonald says the Province plans to continue publishing "NewsReader" during 1991, although Gould and Acosta will no longer be participating. □

Cost-Shared Projects Share Information

Representatives of 33 literacy projects now underway in B.C. met in Vancouver January 21 at a day-long information session convened by the Ministry of Advanced Education, Training and Technology to exchange reports on 1990/91 cost-shared project progress and goals. The meeting, chaired by Norma Kidd, Provincial Literacy Coordinator, MAETT, was held at Vancouver Community College, King Edward Campus, on January 21. Carole Whissell, Director of Federal, Provincial and Territorial Relations, and Sue Smee, Senior Program Consultant, both of the National Literacy Secretariat, Department of Multiculturalism and Citizenship, were also present at the meeting.

The NLS and the MAETT announced joint funding of approximately \$900,000 for the 33 projects in September, 1990 and January, 1991. The majority of the projects are undertaken by community-based literacy groups and all are delivered in partnership with B.C.'s community colleges.

1990/91 projects include native tutor training and literacy outreach programs, learner events, workplace literacy research, assessment for learning disabled adults, and a literacy public awareness program.

Representatives of 30 of the 33 projects attended the meeting. The agenda included short reports from each project, copyright and publication guidelines and reporting procedures, and a discussion of the provincial/federal funding application process. Kidd distributed guidelines for submitting proposals for 1991/92 projects and collected a one-page summary of 1990/91 information from each project representative.

The application form for 1991/92 cost-shared projects is under revision by the MAETT and the Department of Multiculturalism and Citizenship. Information on how to obtain these forms will be available in a future issue of the ALCC Newsletter. □

B.C. Students Published by Library Association

Six B.C. literacy students are included in a three-volume collection of stories by new adult writers published by the Canadian Library Association.

A Literacy Celebration consists of three soft-cover 24-page booklets with 12 to 14 stories of approximately 200 words in each booklet. Each story is accompanied by a black and white illustration by artist Larry Finn. The project was funded with the assistance of a grant from the National Literacy Secretariat of the Department of Multiculturalism and Citizenship to celebrate International Literacy Year.

Barbara Zatlouk, CLA Director of Publishing, says the CLA editorial committee that reviewed the submissions to the collection used "clear language and design guidelines" in developing the project. "The writing in the collection is not arranged by reading levels," she explains, "but instead it becomes progressively more complex with each volume." She adds the committee looked for "personal stories, as well as regional content" in making its selection. The committee sent letters to approximately 2,400 literacy/learner groups across Canada in January, 1990 and received about 200 submissions.

One essay, called "What is the Meaning of Literacy?" was submitted by Irene McKay, an adult basic education student at East Kootenay Community College. In it McKay writes that she "...was passed into grade 11 in high school with the inability to read past the third grade level. There have to be changes made to our education system if people are leaving high school without the ability to read. It is the responsibility of everyone to correct this problem."

McKay has attended E.K.C.C. since 1989 and studies basic spelling, grammar, math and reading skills at the fundamental level. McKay says she was "very excited...just speechless" when she learned from her instructor Lorrie Lane last fall that her essay would be published. "I'm really glad it's come out," she says, "I hope people will relate to my problem and that it will help them to understand."

In addition to McKay and another learner from Cranbrook, the collection includes three submissions from Vancouver and one from Vernon, B.C.

For more information on A Literacy Celebration contact:

Dan Benoit
The Canadian Library Association
200 Elgin Street, Suite 602
Ottawa, Ontario
K2P 1L5
Phone: (613) 232-9625 □

THE LITERACY HOT LINE

The Adult Literacy Contact Centre provides information and encouragement by phone to adults who want to upgrade their skills through adult basic education. Our toll-free number for learners outside the Lower Mainland is:

1-800-663-1293

Book Voyage Writers in Print

A collection of writings by some of the learners who participated in the "Book Voyage" — the International Literacy Year travelling book project coordinated in Canada by the Movement for Canadian Literacy — has been published.

Learners' Voices is a 41-page soft-bound publication soon to be marketed in bookstores across the country. The booklet includes selections from each province and territory, as well as a sample of material from Canada's correctional institutions. Most entries are reproduced in their original form -- typed and handwritten -- and many are accompanied by black-and-white drawings or illustrations. There are three entries — two stories and a drawing — from B.C.

Margaret Banaszkiewicz, interim Project Coordinator at MCL, who edited the booklet, says each provincial/territorial Book Voyage coordinator will receive a supply of 50 complimentary copies, to be made available to learners, tutors and others who contributed. The rest of the supply is intended to be sold by provincial/territorial MCL groups as a fundraiser.

MCL B.C. representative Joyce Cameron says she hasn't decided yet how she will allot the remaining supply after distributing copies to the regional liaisons who took part in organizing last year's B.C. Book Voyage. "Many more people should be thanked," she says, "so we may not have any left over."

MCL plans to market the book through a national distributor once a price is established. Banaszkiewicz adds that some copies will be available through the MCL office in Ottawa and "a second printing is a

possibility. It all depends on how widespread the interest is." Banaszkiewicz says MCL wanted to make the publication of Learners' Voices "a significant event for all those people who contributed to the project." □

Victoria Learners in Job Retraining Project

Getting student writing into print — that's one objective of a Victoria adult learning centre under a newly launched government-sponsored project aimed at retraining three people in computer skills for the job market.

The READ Society, a member organization of Project Literacy Victoria, received a Job Development project grant from Canada Employment and Immigration to begin the ten-month project on January 7. Suzanne Ives, a former PL Victoria volunteer with seven years experience as a literacy educator in Ontario, is Project Manager.

"The aim of the project is to retrain three unemployed people in computer operating or desktop publishing," she explains. "Specifically, the product of our project will be two learner-produced publications in celebration of International Literacy Year." She says the format and content of the publications will be determined as the project grows.

The three trainees will participate in weekly workshops, facilitated by Ives, which will engage them in all aspects of computerized production. "These are hands-on workshops which are also open to all adult learners from the Greater Victoria area," Ives explains. "They will plan, write and produce the booklets together. Participants may submit their contributions or attend the

weekly workshops. Once the group picks a topic, other learners who cannot attend the workshops are welcome to write on the chosen topic and send us their material. They will be able to participate in as much of the production as they wish." The first workshop is scheduled for February 5, 7:00 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. at the READ Society (720 Linden Avenue, Victoria, phone 386-8330).

Debbie Rhymer, project officer with the CEIC office in Victoria which administers Job Development funding, says any non-profit group may apply for similar training programs if it meets current CEIC criteria. (Currently, retraining candidates must have been unemployed for 24 out of the last 30 weeks and the group must meet CEIC hiring plan specifications; other criteria may also apply.) "CEIC's objective was to provide training and work experience for three long-term unemployed persons in computer operating and desktop publishing," says Rhymer. She adds that READ's proposal, because of International Literacy Year, was "timely."

"The activities of the project involve computer skills that are transferable to a number of industries," she explains. "In addition, the sponsor READ had a good record. Given that, and the transferable skills, with the benefit to the community, it was a good project — one that was helpful to both sides." □

Adult Literacy Contact Centre Newsletter

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Vancouver, B.C. V6B 1L8
1-800-663-1293 Toll-free in B.C.
684-0624 Lower Mainland
684-8520 Facsimile

The Adult Literacy Contact Centre is a project of the Adult Basic Education Association of B.C. and is jointly funded by the Ministry of Advanced Education, Training and Technology; and the National Literacy Secretariat.

The Centre welcomes receiving your literacy news by phone, fax or mail. We reserve the right to edit written submissions for the newsletter.

The newsletter is available free of charge to any individual or agency upon request.

Summer Edition of Our Own Words

Literacy and adult basic education students enrolled in B.C. public colleges have until early February to submit writing for consideration for a third edition of Our Own Words, the anthology of ABE student writing published by the Ministry of Advanced Education, Training and Technology. The first edition of Our Own Words appeared in September, 1989; a second edition was published in the fall of 1990, and a third is planned for summer, 1991.

The anthology is a collection of work at the intermediate, advanced and provincial levels. Categories for submissions include poetry, opinion, fiction, exposition and personal experience. Writing from each college will be included in the new collection.

Gwen Armstrong, Coordinator of Adult Basic Education for the Ministry, reports guidelines for submissions were sent to every college ABE Department last October. The guidelines recommend that students submit entries to their ABE English instructors by February 4, and instructors have until March 8 to submit student entries to a designated Our Own Words editorial committee member representative at each college. The committee will review all submissions and choose the 1991 writings.

Armstrong says the procedure is similar to last year, but timelines have been extended to allow for more participation. In addition to the guidelines and new submission forms, each college received a poster advertising the project and a list of editorial board members. Armstrong adds that, as in the past, she expects "a healthy response" to the new edition. □

Literacy Play Revived on Video

A documentary adaptation of Reading the Signs, the musical literacy play which toured Canada last year as a fundraising and awareness event, has been completed and negotiations are underway to air it on national television.

The documentary is a project of World Literacy of Canada, a federally incorporated non-profit organization which, since 1955, has supported literacy and development projects around the world. The organization produced the play, known as the "Developing Freedom Literacy Play Tour," in partnership with Toronto's Young People's Theatre in honour of International Literacy Year.

The hour-long video will be available on video cassette to literacy organizations, schools, libraries and non-governmental organizations at cost, according to Scott Dickson, Special Projects Director at World Literacy, who conceived the original tour and initiated the video project.

Dickson says he can't confirm a broadcast date yet, but he should know "very soon" if negotiations with the CTV network to air the show succeed. "The video is all shot and in post-production," he adds. "The glue to hold it all together now is confirming the celebrity host."

Dickson describes the video as "an adaptation of the best scenes from the play, interwoven with commentary from learners and tutors who were involved with the production." The production "weaves together the thoughts of these people in and out of key scenes." He summarizes the production as "30 minutes of 'a best of' and approximately 20 minutes of testimonial." Some of the testimonials come from learners and tutors in Saint John, New Brunswick, the Saskatchewan Literacy Council and the Native Friendship Centre in Fort Erie, Ontario.

To produce the video adaptation, the play was recreated in a private studio in Toronto under production manager Mark Wright, with script adaptation by original playwright Jim Betts. Dickson says the production was "shot TV-style, with lots of close-ups and minimal sets. The performances are very real, though -- it's good T.V."

For further information contact Scott Dickson at:

World Literacy of Canada
692 Coxwell Avenue
Toronto, Ontario M4C 3B6
Phone: (416) 465-4667 □

THE LITERACY MATERIALS BULLETIN



The Literacy Materials Bulletin is a 12-page selection of reviews of instructional materials for adult basic education. Copies of the first two issues (Spring and Fall, 1990) are available free of charge on request from the Contact Centre.

Adult Literacy Featured at Continuing Education Conference

The American Association for Adult and Continuing Education has issued a call for program proposals for its 40th Annual Adult Education Conference in Montreal October 14-20 — the first time the conference will be held outside the United States. The theme of the Conference, which is aimed at adult and continuing education practitioners, teachers, volunteers, trainers, researchers and other professionals, is "Lifelong Learning: An Odyssey to the Future."

Adult literacy is one of four conference sub-themes proposed for round-table breakfast meetings. The others are adult education administration and policies, the focus and role of adult and continuing education in the year 2000, and strategies and implementation. A proposal for a literacy-theme presentation should be directed at questions such as:

- * who are the adults enrolled in literacy programs?
- * what are the characteristics of the most effective programs?
- * what problems do learners encounter?

Proposals for concurrent sessions must be directed towards one of the sub-themes and one of a choice of program units. Some of these units

are: adult basic education, adult learners with disabilities, history of adult education, vocational and career education, research in adult education. Presentation formats can include symposia, workshops, lectures and media presentations.

The deadline for proposals is February 15, 1991 and selected presenters will be notified during April. A complete package, which includes a program abstract and proposal form, is available from the AAACE Conference Program Committee through:

Alcide Daigneault, President
College de Rimouski
Rimouski, Quebec
G5L 4H6
Phone: (418) 723-1880
Fax: (418) 724-4961 ☐

The Bulletin Board

COORDINATOR NEEDED

Project Literacy Terrace seeks a coordinator for a new volunteer tutor program. The goals of the program, one of the 1990/91 literacy cost-shared projects between the Ministry of Advanced Education, Training and Technology and the National Literacy Secretariat, are: to recruit and train tutors; match learners with tutors; raise community awareness of literacy issues; and establish and maintain a literacy resource centre. The program requires a full-time coordinator for a one year position beginning in March.

The closing date to apply for the position is February 15. For further information contact Elaine Hall at Canada Employment and Immigration (Terrace).

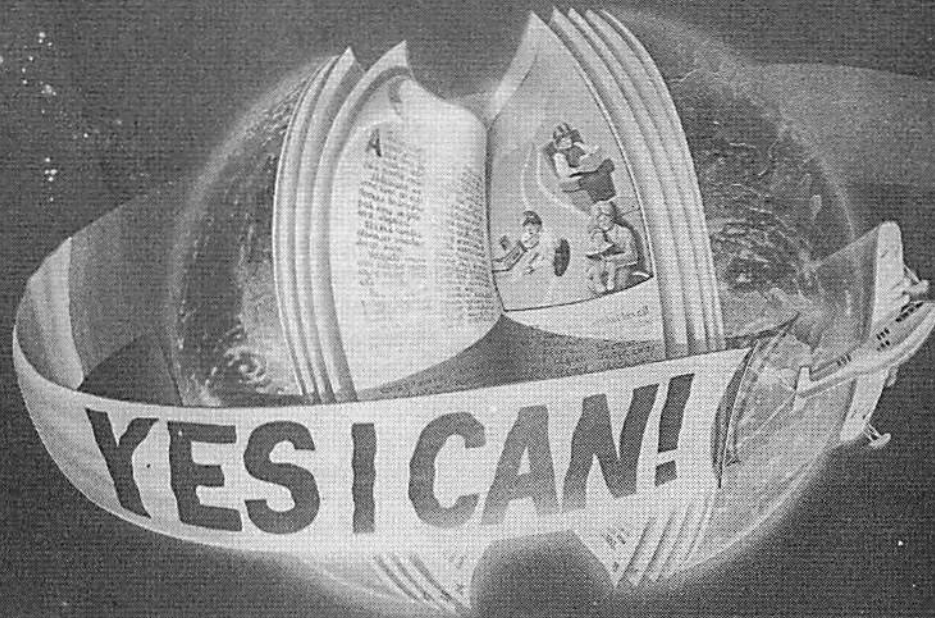
Phone: 635-7134

INPUT WANTED

"Partnerships at Work," a 1990/91 cost-shared project which is examining literacy initiatives in the workplace, seeks input from the field. Coordinator Shirley Abrams reports she is compiling a directory of B.C. workforce education programs, existing or in the planning stages. All such programs will receive her project's quarterly newsletter. Contact Abrams at:

736 West 46th Avenue
Vancouver, B.C. V5Z 2R2
Phone: 263-5922
Fax: 640-0300

Learn to Read



Help Others to Read

ADULT LITERACY CONTACT CENTRE

for help and information:

1-800-663-1293

or (lower mainland)

684-0624

Copies of this full-colour poster measuring 16 1/4" x 22" are available free of charge from the Contact Centre